

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5121

As Passed House - Amended:

April 14, 2005

Title: An act relating to determining long-term air transportation needs.

Brief Description: Assessing long-term air transportation needs.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Keiser, Swecker, Poulsen, Schmidt and Haugen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/24/05, 3/31/05 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/14/05, 93-2.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment and report results by July 1, 2006
- Requires the DOT to conduct a 25-year capacity and facilities market analysis, forecasting demands for passengers and air cargo, and reporting results by July 1, 2007.
- Directs the Governor to appoint an Aviation Planning Council on how to meet forecasted needs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Wallace, Vice Chair; Woods, Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Buck, Campbell, Curtis, Dickerson, Ericksen, Flannigan, Hankins, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kilmer, Lovick, Morris, Nixon, Rodne, Schindler, Sells, Shabro, Simpson, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative B. Sullivan.

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).

Background:

Counties and cities planning under the Growth Management Act are required to include in their comprehensive plans a process for identifying and siting essential public facilities. Essential public facilities are those facilities typically difficult to site, including airports. Additionally, no local comprehensive plan or development regulation may preclude the siting of essential public facilities.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The Aviation Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT Aviation) must conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment. The assessment must include a statewide analysis, regarding both commercial aviation and general aviation, of existing airport facilities, and passenger and air cargo transportation capacity. However, the primary focus of the assessment must be on commercial aviation. The assessment results must be submitted to the Legislature, the Governor, the Transportation Commission, and regional transportation planning organizations by July 1, 2006.

After submitting the statewide airport capacity and facilities assessment, the WSDOT Aviation must conduct a statewide airport capacity and facilities market analysis. The analysis must include a statewide needs analysis of airport facilities, passenger and air cargo transportation capacity, and demand and forecast needs over the next 25 years. A more detailed analysis must be conducted regarding the Puget Sound, Southwest Washington, Spokane, and Tri-Cities regions. The analysis must address the forecasted needs of both commercial aviation and general aviation; however, the primary focus of the analysis must be on commercial aviation. The analysis results must be submitted to the Legislature, the Governor, the Transportation Commission, and regional transportation planning organizations by July 1, 2007.

Upon completion of both the statewide assessment and analysis, the Governor must appoint an Aviation Planning Council to make recommendations, based on the findings of the assessment and analysis, regarding how best to meet the statewide commercial and general aviation capacity needs. The recommendations must include the placement of future commercial and general aviation airport facilities in regions determined to be in need of more improved aviation facilities. The 10-member Aviation Planning Council must be composed of various aviation planning stakeholders, public agencies, and the public. The Council expires July 1, 2009.

If specific funding for the purposes of this act is not provided in the transportation budget by June 30, 2005, the act is null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: There is a need for evaluation of both our current and future commercial and general aviation airport infrastructure. Also, the commercial airline industry is growing, but that growth is taking different patterns than predicted in the past. There is a need to identify long-term airport needs in order to plan for the future of aviation and to serve the state's future economic needs.

Testimony Against: When evaluating airports, it is critical to consider the impacts that airports have on communities. These studies and the Planning Council are made up of air industry representatives, with little recognition of the communities where they are sited. These impacts must be evaluated.

Persons Testifying: (In support) John Sibold, Washington State Department of Transportation; Pat Jones, Washington Public Ports Association; Linda Hull, Alaska Airlines; and Terry Finn, Port of Seattle.

(Opposed) Chip Adams, Save Our Communities.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.